



State of Connecticut COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Central Office ~ 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

Testimony to the Human Services Committee Tuesday, March 12, 2015

SB 1046, AN ACT PROHIBITING FELONS FROM MANAGING STATE ASSISTANCE FUNDS

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities **OPPOSES SB 1046, AN ACT PROHIBITING FELONS FROM MANAGING STATE ASSISTANCE FUNDS.**

Not only does the Commission oppose this legislation the General Assembly does as well. **Section 46a-79** states, "*The General Assembly finds that the public is best protected when criminal offenders are rehabilitated and returned to society prepared to take their places as productive citizens and that the ability of returned offenders to find meaningful employment is directly related to their normal functioning in the community. It is therefore the policy of this state to encourage all employers to give favorable consideration to providing jobs to qualified individuals, including those who may have criminal conviction records.*"

We have had numerous discussions with the Department of Social Services, an agency that understands better than any other agency the link between poverty and crime. We also are confident that they understand redemption, thus, we do not feel there is a need for an exemption from existing law. Based on discussions with DSS we know that the agency does not need such a provision and CHRO opposes this bill.

We are fearful of the bad public policy this bill seeks to promote and we believe the way it is crafted is fatally flawed. An agency cannot promulgate policies that contravene statutes. Rewriting this bill will not make it better nor create good public policy.

We urge the Human Services Committee to allow this bill to go no further.